



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
45 L St., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <https://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY BUREAU AND WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU ANNOUNCE THE AVAILABILITY FOR LICENSING OF INTERSTITIAL CHANNELS IN THE 800 MHZ MID-BAND

WP Docket No. 15-32

The Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau and the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (Bureaus) announce the availability for licensing of interstitial (12.5 kHz bandwidth) channels in the 800 MHz Mid-Band (809-817/854-862 MHz). The Bureaus will begin accepting applications for interstitial channels on **July 7, 2022**.

Background

On October 22, 2018, the Commission released the *PLMR Report and Order* which updated its Part 90 rules to provide new spectrum capacity and eliminate unnecessary restrictions in the private land mobile radio (PLMR) services.¹ Among other things, the *PLMR Report and Order* created 318 new “interstitial” channels in the 800 MHz Mid-Band to accommodate increased demand for spectrum capacity from public safety and other PLMR users.² The *PLMR Report and Order* also adopted technical rules for coordinating interstitial channel applications to ensure that new stations authorized on interstitial channels would not interfere with incumbent stations on adjacent channels.³

The addition of these interstitial channels enables licensees to take advantage of the increased availability of equipment that uses narrower bandwidth than the 25 kilohertz bandwidth channels historically used in the 800 MHz band.⁴ The newly established interstitial channels are listed by center frequency in Section 90.613 of the Commission’s rules.⁵

¹ *Creation of Interstitial 12.5 Kilohertz Channels in the 800 MHz Band Between 809-817/854-862 MHz; Amendment of Part 90 of the Commission’s Rules to Improve Access to Private Land Mobile Radio Spectrum; Land Mobile Communications Council Petition for Rulemaking Regarding Interim Eligibility for 800 MHz Expansion Band and Guard Band Frequencies; Petition for Rulemaking Regarding Conditional Licensing Authority Above 470 MHz*, Report and Order and Order, 33 FCC Rcd 10222 (2018) (*PLMR Report and Order*).

² *Id.* at 10223, 10231, paras. 2, 21. The 800 MHz Mid-Band consists of the Interleaved Band (809-815/854-860 MHz, 240 channels), the Expansion Band (815-816/860-861 MHz, 40 channels), and the Guard Band (816-817/861-862 MHz, 40 channels). *Id.* at 10225, para. 8.

³ *Id.* at 10234-40, paras. 34-43. The interference criteria adopted in the *PLMR Report and Order* was later modified by an order on reconsideration. See *Creation of Interstitial 12.5 Kilohertz Channels in the 800 MHz Band Between 809-817/854-862 MHz*, Order on Reconsideration, 35 FCC Rcd 4940, 4942-43, paras. 9-11 (2020) (*PLMR Order on Reconsideration*). See also 47 CFR § 90.621(d).

⁴ See 47 CFR § 90.613, n.1 (limiting the channel bandwidth for interstitial channels to 12.5 kHz).

⁵ 800 MHz Mid-Band interstitial channels are denoted with an “a” after the channel number. See 47 CFR § 90.613.

The Commission directed the Bureaus in the *PLMR Report and Order* to announce by public notice the date upon which applicants in various National Public Safety Planning Advisory Committee (NPSPAC) regions may begin filing applications to license interstitial channels in the 800 MHz Mid-Band.⁶ The Commission linked the availability of the interstitial channels to the lifting of the application freezes imposed as part of 800 MHz reconfiguration.⁷

Interstitial Channels Available Nationwide

Since 800 MHz band reconfiguration is complete nationwide,⁸ and the Bureaus have lifted the freezes imposed as part of reconfiguration,⁹ by this Public Notice, the Bureaus announce that interstitial channels in the 800 MHz Mid-Band will be available for licensing in all NPSPAC regions on **July 7, 2022**.

With the release of this Public Notice, each frequency coordinator must provide notification to all other participating coordinators of each request it receives to coordinate channels in the 800 MHz Mid-Band. The purpose of this notification is to enable frequency coordinators to address and resolve conflicting coordination requests prior to filing applications with the Commission.

Beginning on **July 7, 2022**, Commission-certified frequency coordinators may file applications, in the Universal Licensing System (ULS), on behalf of eligible applicants, for interstitial channels in the 800 MHz Mid-Band. Any application filed for interstitial channels before **July 7, 2022** will be dismissed.

Contour Overlap Provisions

Beginning on **July 7, 2022** and thereafter, all applications filed for 800 MHz Mid-Band channels must comply with the contour overlap provisions detailed in Section 90.621(d).¹⁰ Geographic separation between fixed stations operating on adjacent channels in the 800 MHz Mid-Band is based on a lack of contour overlap.¹¹

Applications for 800 MHz Mid-Band channels will be subject to both a forward and reciprocal contour analysis.¹² The interference contour levels to be studied are detailed in the contour matrix listed in Section 90.621(d)(3) of the Commission's rules.¹³ Applicants may submit applications which cause contour overlap under the forward analysis or receive contour overlap under the reciprocal analysis if they include with their application a letter of concurrence from the incumbent licensee receiving or causing the contour overlap.¹⁴

⁶ *PLMR Report and Order*, 33 FCC Rcd at 10232, para. 24.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Improving Public Safety Communications in the 800 MHz Band*, Order (Terminating Proceeding), 36 FCC Rcd 7690 (2021).

⁹ *Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau and Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Announce the Post Rebanding Availability for Licensing of Additional Sprint-Vacated, Expansion Band, and Guard Band Channels in the 800 MHz Band*, WT Docket No. 02-55, Public Notice, DA 21-706 (rel. Jun. 16, 2021).

¹⁰ 47 CFR § 90.621(d).

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² 47 CFR § 90.621(d)(1)-(2).

¹³ 47 CFR § 90.621(d)(3).

¹⁴ 47 CFR § 90.621(d)(4).

Applications Seeking Early Access to Interstitial Channels

Finally, the Bureaus will dismiss without prejudice any pending applications that include a request for waiver for early access to interstitial channels in the 800 MHz mid-band that are the subject of this Public Notice. We dismiss these requests in order to provide equal opportunity to all applicants and establish a stable spectral environment for the release of these interstitial channels pursuant to this Public Notice. We note that any dismissed application must be refiled to be considered without preference or priority in accordance with the procedures outlined above.

For further information, contact Brian Marengo, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau at (202) 418-0838 or Brian.Marengo@fcc.gov; Joshua Smith, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Mobility Division at (717) 338-2502 or Joshua.Smith@fcc.gov.

Action by the Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau and Acting Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau.

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